

I am the testing coordinator for [REDACTED] high school. Is it Ok for me to open our boxes.

Kenesta [REDACTED]
Special Education Liaison
[REDACTED] High School
[REDACTED]
Philadelphia, PA [REDACTED]
(215) [REDACTED]
(215) [REDACTED]

Follow Up

From : Karen Kolsky [REDACTED]

Mon, Mar 12, 2012 12:44 PM

Subject : Follow Up

To : Francesca Palladinetti [REDACTED]

As a follow-up to our earlier discussion, can an additional person be assigned with Uma to Wagner?
Also, principal is requesting that if there is any procedures that were observed by Uma that are not be followed, if the principal can know so she can make any necessary corrections for the remainder of the testing period?
Thank you.
Karen

Karen Kolsky, Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent
The School District of Philadelphia
Academic Division Seven
Leeds Middle School
1100 Mt. Pleasant Avenue
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19150
Office Telephone: 215.248.6685 Facsimile: 215.248.5100

From : Karen Kolsky [REDACTED] >

Mon, Mar 12, 2012 12:57 PM

Subject : Re: Follow Up

To : Fran Newberg [REDACTED]

Since there will be a formal investigation, perhaps switching would be best.
The principal is crafting a statement and she will hand deliver tomorrow.
On my way to 440.
Thank so much.

Karen Kolsky, Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent
The School District of Philadelphia
Academic Division Seven
Leeds Middle School
1100 Mt. Pleasant Avenue
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19150
Office Telephone: 215.248.6685 Facsimile: 215.248.5100

[REDACTED]
Philadelphia, PA 19132

(215) [REDACTED]

(215) [REDACTED]

Switching schools

From : Daniel Piotrowski [REDACTED]

Mon, Mar 12, 2012 10:35 PM

Subject : Switching schools

To : Uma Jayaraman [REDACTED]

Uma,

I wanted to let you know that Fran got a call today about Wagner. The principal apparently called their academic division and said something about you interfering with their PSSA administration.

Fran and I thought the best thing would be for you and me to switch schools, so that you would handle Roosevelt and I would take Wagner.

I tried to call you a couple of times earlier today. Can you call me to discuss?

Did you have a time to be at Wagner tomorrow?

Thanks,

Daniel

[REDACTED]

Dan,

Of course, "interference" is an excuse to get me out of there, since my constant presence made them very uncomfortable. I train folks in monitoring unobtrusively. Of the 10 teachers I monitored, I can say that there was just ONE, [REDACTED] in rm. [REDACTED] who did not try to help the students and followed the administration procedure correctly. ALL the others, including the test coordinator, [REDACTED] (rm. [REDACTED]) tried to freely help them and my presence in her and the other sp. ed. helping teacher [REDACTED] rm. [REDACTED] was (unsurprisingly) uncomfortable. A few teachers gave the students calculators to use before sealing the pages with math items 1-5 (the non-calculator section.) Basically, this school has done whatever they felt like for too long and the status quo is being challenged.

After testing, as I helped the TC prepare the materials for tomorrow, she said that she felt that the school was being targeted, and there was "gotcha" stance. Of course she was very upset that she could not help her students. She tried arguing with me about what can be allowed when students are done early. I told her the 3 things, and she said, who says that etc. I called Diane Simaska of the PDE and let her speak to her. Then, she had questions about why motivational posters should come down and spoke to Diane about it also. Then, she went to the principal and had a talk. A little later, the principal asked me to come to her office and let me know that some "students" let her know that they were uncomfortable with my presence and that she was so stressed out that she may die of it (or something to the effect).

A few rooms had somethings on the walls, e.g., math terms, problem solving etc. and the TC had a student who had finished early working on the computer while others were still at the test. I asked her to not allow this. This upset her. Also, she locked her room, so also [REDACTED] as I peaked through the glass during my rounds, and saw them assisting the students, they became very uncomfortable. Also, I saw 2 students sharing the CR (one had it on scratch paper that the other copied.) I asked [REDACTED] for their names and suggested that it is a good idea that they be separated. He said, why?, do you think they are sharing the answers? Obviously, he knew what was going on.

Another sp. ed. student in another room with a part time teacher kept asking her to give the answers. When the teacher said to her that she should be doing on her own, the student said last year, [REDACTED] gave the answers and she just bubbled it. I have the student's name.

Also, notice that every room is especially fitted with a sliding lock that they can use to lock from inside. I wonder why, when the regular lock worked?

I am writing all of this to make you aware of the goings on and that they should not think that they can go about their merry (cheating) ways since I am out of the way.

Hope the attached schedule will be helpful. I had planned on adding a day everyday to the schedule. If it is helpful, you can continue with it.

I need to be @ Wagner ~ 8 am, I will meet you there, then proceed to Roosevelt. Or, let me know where should I go. I will leave home ~ 6:30. Please call me @ home [REDACTED] before that. Let me catch a few hours of sleep.

Thanks.

Uma

From: "Daniel Piotrowski" [REDACTED]
To: "Uma Jayaraman" [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, March 12, 2012 10:35:32 PM
Subject: Switching schools

Uma,

I wanted to let you know that Fran got a call today about Wagner. The principal apparently called their academic division and said something about you interfering with their PSSA administration.

Fran and I thought the best thing would be for you and me to switch schools, so that you would handle Roosevelt and I would take Wagner.

I tried to call you a couple of times earlier today. Can you call me to discuss?

Did you have a time to be at Wagner tomorrow?

Thanks,

Daniel

[REDACTED]

 **Wagner M S PSSA Schedule.docx**
 20 KB

Zimbra

Issues at Wagner

From : Daniel Piotrowski [REDACTED]

Tue, Mar 13, 2012 09:49 PM

Subject : Issues at Wagner**To :** Maya Johnstone [REDACTED]

Ms. Johnstone,

I apologize for the late hour of this message, but after reviewing my notes from monitoring today and consulting some experts, I feel compelled to write you to resolve some of the issues at Wagner regarding PSSA administration.

Due to the level and number of violations witnessed at Wagner, the Office of Accountability will start an investigation into the testing procedures at Wagner. I am not sure when this will start or who will be leading it. However, it is critical, though, for you to address violations that cannot continue for the rest of the PSSA testing window.

Violations I witnessed today:

- Testing coordinator giving out extra test books as "demonstration" material
- Teachers swapping testing material without the testing coordinator's knowledge
- Test coordinator leaving secure materials in main office
- Teacher leaving secure materials unattended in classrooms
- Improper materials on walls in classrooms
- Teachers distributing calculators before the appropriate time -- when first section is sealed
- Teacher not reading the complete directions before starting a section
- Teacher not having the directions in possession before distributing secure materials to students
- Multiple students leaving a test session for a bathroom break before the testing was complete
- Teacher coaching students on responses
- Students talking during the assessment
- Teachers returning materials up to 90 minutes after the class concludes
- Teachers reviewing test booklets after submitted by students

Things that we do not consider violations, but PDE might:

- Motivational posters in classrooms
- Allowing students to do word puzzles instead of just reading

Other issues that are not necessarily violations, but are not best practices:

- Noise in hallways
- Noise via ventilation system from non-assessed students

Considering your school in the middle of the tests, I leave it to you as the best way to address these issues. You would know best whether it is to a) write and distribute a memo outlining the "do's and don'ts", b) distributing such material by email, or c) making a P.A. announcement, d) something else, or e) a combination of such methods.

As for [REDACTED], I would like to reiterate my suggestion that he not continue to administer the PSSA this year. At a minimum, both Ms. Benning and I witnessed himself talking to the class with language that was neither the assessment nor test administration material. Although I cannot confirm absolutely that he was providing answers, his actions were clear violations of PSSA policy, District safety policies, and Wagner's test administration plan.

I will be back in the morning. It is likely that someone else monitors Wagner's testing on Thursday. It is also possible that you might have multiple monitors on some days of testing.

I really desire that our new monitoring procedures will be helpful to your school.

Thanks,
Daniel

Daniel Piotrowski
Executive Director, Accountability and Assessment

Zimbra

[REDACTED]

School District of Philadelphia
440 N. Broad St.
Philadelphia, PA 19130

[REDACTED]
215-400-5886

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA
General Louis Wagner Middle School
1701 Chelton Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19126
"A School of Excellence"

215.276.5252 (Office)

215.276.5849 (Fax)

To: Fran Newberg, Deputy Chief
Office of Accountability, Assessment and Educational Technology

From: Maya Johnstone, Principal
Yvette Benning, Assistant Principal

Date: March 13, 2012

SUBJECT: Testing Monitoring

During our first day of testing, Ms. Johnstone and Ms. Benning were approached by a seventh grade special needs student, who was upset because she thought she had done something wrong. After speaking with the student, she stated that, "The testing lady" [REDACTED] questioned her during the PSSA today about whether or not her teachers from last year gave her answers during the 2011 PSSA. The student responded, "No." In another 7th grade classroom, the teacher stated that [REDACTED] leaned over the shoulders of her students. She also said some had questions, but felt uncomfortable asking them. The teacher stated that the students said that [REDACTED] scared them and made them feel that they were doing something wrong. The teacher stated that this was the worst testing environment of her career.

A special needs teacher stated that [REDACTED] went rifling through his testing materials and removed several items from his crate. Two special needs students overheard [REDACTED] tell their teacher that they were cheating. The students spoke to Ms. Johnstone after school because they wanted to tell her they were not cheating. In addition, the teachers were told that students could not color, draw, or do puzzles if they finished their test earlier than their peers. [REDACTED] said that the students could read or lay their head on the table. These are just some of the situations that have occurred and many of the teachers are upset and are in the process of filing a complaint with their union.

Zimbra

Fwd: PSSA at Wagner

From : Penny Nixon [REDACTED]
Subject : Fwd: PSSA at Wagner

Thu, Mar 15, 2012 09:15 AM

To : Fran Newberg <[REDACTED]>
Cc : Karren Dunkley [REDACTED], Karen Kolsky [REDACTED]

Good Morning Fran,

I am not going to respond to Erik, because I was the former principal at Wagner. However, I am asking that you and Karen investigate the allegations. In addition, I spoke to principals at the meeting on Tuesday and they expressed similar concerns. I've asked them to put their concerns in writing, and I will forward them to you to handle.

Thanks,
Penny

From: "Erik [REDACTED]"
To: kkolsky [REDACTED]
Cc: jjordan [REDACTED] pnixon [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 14, 2012 9:22:20 PM
Subject: PSSA at Wagner

Dr. Kolsky,

I am very concerned at the reports that I am hearing from Wagner Middle School. The school is/was being monitored by [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] (don't recall the last names) from the school district.

It has been brought to my attention that [REDACTED] has been interviewing at least one student during testing asking if a specific teacher gave her answers on the test last year. This is extremely inappropriate to be done during testing. Interviews at the school can be conducted as they have been in the past. This made the student hysterical while also accusing a specific teacher of inappropriate behavior - which can easily spread through the school.

Monitors have also been standing over students for a period of time watching them complete the test. Students have stopped taking the test because they became extremely nervous.

Finally, I found out that [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] having been observing classrooms outside of the classrooms at the door as well as [REDACTED] crouching outside of doors listening to what is being done. Is this appropriate monitoring? Is this how the state has asked the district to monitor the testing environment?

The entire staff at Wagner feels they are being spied on. I understand that Wagner is a school reported in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* as being investigated, but how can specific accusation be made when the staff hasn't even been questioned yet.

I am requesting that you intervene to insure that the monitors that are assigned act in a professional manner. Ultimately, how can the PSSA be valid when students and staff experience these examples of distrust and unprofessional behavior.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this serious situation.

Erik [REDACTED]

Erik [REDACTED]
Philadelphia Federation of Teachers
Staff Representative - Northwest Region

Philadelphia Federation of Teachers
1816 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103-4999
215-587-6738
215-665-1903 (fax)

www.pft.org

[REDACTED] (e-mail)

Penny Nixon
Chief Academic Officer
The School District of Philadelphia
440 N. Broad Street, Suite 210
Philadelphia, PA 19130
Telephone: 215.400.4200
Facsimile: 215.400.4201
Email: [REDACTED]

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Re: PSSA at Wagner

From : Penny Nixon [REDACTED]

Thu, Mar 15, 2012 09:38 AM

Subject : Re: PSSA at Wagner

To : Karen Kolsky [REDACTED]

Cc : Fran Newberg [REDACTED]

I am not going to respond to the issues at Wagner because I was the former principal. Therefore, I am recusing myself, and I will forward concerns to you and Fran.

From: "Karen Kolsky" [REDACTED]

To: "Penny Nixon" [REDACTED]

Cc: "Fran Newberg" [REDACTED]

Sent: Thursday, March 15, 2012 9:22:18 AM

Subject: Re: PSSA at Wagner

Hi Penny.

I do not think you need to respond this time.

The email was directed to me and a cc to you and Jerry Jordan.

I am just about to write a brief response and share it with Fran and Andy before I send it to Erik.

We are good to go.

Thank for your support.

Karen Kolsky, Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent
The School District of Philadelphia
Academic Division Seven
Leeds Middle School
1100 Mt. Pleasant Avenue
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19150
Office Telephone: 215.248.6685 Facsimile: 215.248.5100

Zimbra

Fwd: Unfair testing environment at Wagner

Thu, Mar 15, 2012 09:47 AM

From : Penny Nixon [REDACTED]
Subject : Fwd: Unfair testing environment at Wagner
To : Karen Kolsky [REDACTED]

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: "Melody [REDACTED]"
To: "Penny Nixon" [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 15, 2012 9:39:41 AM
Subject: Unfair testing environment at Wagner

Hello,

My name is Melody [REDACTED] and I would like to inform you of the unfair testing practices here at Wagner Middle School.

Since the testing boxes containing the PSSA arrived, my school has been under scrutiny. Once the boxes arrived, [REDACTED] was sent from Office of Accountability to retape the boxes using security tape. After that, two days later she came back to "count" the boxes. As the testing coordinator, I have been succumbed to numerous complaints from both [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] (another testing monitor) regarding our testing environment. They sent me an email saying out students could not draw, write, color, or complete word searches after completing the tests, and in addition, could not have any motivational posters, quotes, or sayings in the room.

This however, is not the same treatment at other school district schools and I think the district needs to step in and put a stop to this harassment. Myself and my colleagues are all prepared to fight this with legal action if the school district of Philadelphia does not put a stop to this.

In addition to this already stressful and tense work environment, myself and my colleagues have also been subjected to [REDACTED] creeping behind our closed doors during testing time. Students were also called out of the classrooms during testing and interviewed regarding past testing practices! As you can imagine, this has caused major disruptions and problems with our students seeing strangers creeping and peering at them during testing.

This jail cell type environment is clearly a recipe for failure. I am asking that someone immediately put an end to these unfair practices.

Thank you,

Melody [REDACTED]

Sent from my iPhone

--

Penny Nixon
Chief Academic Officer
The School District of Philadelphia
440 N. Broad Street, Suite 210
Philadelphia, PA 19130
Telephone: 215.400.4200
Facsimile: 215.400.4201
Email: [REDACTED]



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Zimbra

Re: Wagner Visit

From : Penny Nixon [REDACTED]
Subject : Re: Wagner Visit
To : Karen Kolsky [REDACTED]

Wed, Mar 14, 2012 11:16 PM

Thanks. Have a good night.

Sent from my iPhone

On Mar 14, 2012, at 11:10 PM, "Kolsky, Karen" [REDACTED] wrote:

Thanks.

I spoke to Fran Newberg at length today regarding [REDACTED] actions yesterday and [REDACTED] email today.

As a result:

1. [REDACTED] was removed from Wagner as a monitor. I asked Maya to put her observations into a written statement and give to Fran.
 Fran will hold an [REDACTED] next week.
2. Many of the cited violations indicated by [REDACTED] will not warrant an Office investigation, just corrections; eg. students going in groups to the bathroom being escorted
3. Fran has consulted with both Andy Rosen and Mike Davis
4. If needed, then there may be an investigation but still focusing on previous allegations.

I am kept in the loop and communicate with Maya.

Karen Kolsky, Ed.D.
 Assistant Superintendent
 Academic Division Seven
 The School District of Philadelphia

On Mar 14, 2012, at 10:54 PM, "Nixon, Penny" [REDACTED] wrote:

FYI

From: "Jack [REDACTED]"
To: "Penny Nixon" [REDACTED]
Cc: "Marlicia Johnson" [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 14, 2012 10:49:36 PM
Subject: Wagner Visit

Penny,

When I got to Wagner Maya was really upset about what transpired Tuesday. There seems to be miscommunication concerning the monitoring process. Is this process suppose be a supportive or an adversarial, "I got you process?" The process is unsettling for students and staff. Students are being distracted by monitors asking questions during testing. Are our people performing the job of State investigators? This is what I found:

- I saw an email Maya received from Dan [REDACTED] that was rather scathing
- Based on what I was told, the staff has gone through at least four professional developments focused on PSSA policies, procedures, protocols, accommodations, etc.
- I was told the administration and staff adhered to all assessment policies, procedures and protocols
- Monitors did a walkthrough to ensure all State mandates, concerning the covering of information in and outside of classrooms, were adhered to
- At the end of yesterday's session (Tuesday, March 13, 2012), the administration was told everything

went well

- That evening (Tuesday, March 13, 2012, 9:49 PM), Maya received an email from Dan [REDACTED] with a list of thirteen testing in proprieties with no room numbers, proctor's names, times, etc.
- I was told some of his observations were based on what he could hear from outside of classrooms without knowledge of what was really taking place. In on instance I was told he was outside of a Special Education class were accommodations (reading some information) was being administered
- I was told some procedures they were called on were not part of the State recommendations and/or were not completely vetted system wide prior to testing (what students were and were not allowed to do after completion of their personal test for a session)
- The process is unsettling for students and staff
- Students are being distracted by monitors asking questions during testing

A school spends most of a school year developing the appropriate instructional climate and culture not only for the PSSA's, but for any assessment students and teachers face. With the added excitement of the PSSA Count Down, and PSSA pep rallies, I get a sense the school is being cheated out of their desire to perform well.

What I saw at Wagner this morning was a well organized environment. My question and concern is, have many of the monitors ever been completely responsible for the planning, scheduling, implementation, accommodations and monitoring of the PSSA's at the school level?

I understand the monitoring, but do they want our students and schools to fail?

Jack

--

Jack [REDACTED]
Special Assistant to The
Chief Academic Officer
Philadelphia School District
[REDACTED]
Philadelphia, PA 19150
Phone: [REDACTED]
Fax: [REDACTED]

--

Penny Nixon
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Zimbra

Fwd: Monitoring at Wagner

From : Maya Johnstone [REDACTED]
Subject : Fwd: Monitoring at Wagner
To : Yvette Benning [REDACTED]

Fri, Mar 16, 2012 12:36 AM

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: "Maya Johnstone" [REDACTED]
To: "Pedro Ramos" <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, March 16, 2012 12:36:11 AM
Subject: Monitoring at Wagner

Hi Mr. Ramos,

I am writing to request an outside and impartial monitor for the remainder of the testing period. The monitors from the Office of Accountability have treated my staff unfairly this week. On Tuesday [REDACTED] interviewed a 7th grade student during testing. [REDACTED] asked the student if her teachers last year gave her answers to the test. The student became upset, rushed through her test and came looking for me. On Wednesday, [REDACTED] was seen crouching outside of two classrooms. He asked me and my assistant principal to come and listen because he thought the teacher was giving answers. We told him we couldn't hear anything, plus observations from behind a closed door are invalid. These are just two incidents from the past four days that has left me and my staff feeling harassed.

In addition, notes have been written each day but the monitors refuse to share the notes. If I can't see the violations how can I rectify the issues. In previous years monitors told me what to remove from all testing environments, as well as any other improprieties that were witnessed so that I could rectify the issues. Due to the questioning and treatment from the monitors I am requesting different monitors from another department. My staff and I welcome monitors. You can send more than one. We just want to be treated fairly during this process. The last four days have been stressful and counterproductive for the staff and students. Hopefully you can help to provide our students with the optimum testing environment for the next three days.

Thank you for considering this request.

--
Maya Johnstone
Wagner Middle School, Principal
1701 Chelton Ave. Phila. PA 19126
Cell: [REDACTED]
School: 215.276.5252
Fax: 215.276.5849

Zimbra

Fwd: PSSA Testing**From :** Francesca Palladinetti [REDACTED]

Fri, Mar 16, 2012 02:00 AM

Subject : Fwd: PSSA Testing**To :** Karen Kolsky [REDACTED]**Reply To :** Fran Newberg [REDACTED]

Fran Newberg, Ed.D.
Deputy Chief
Accountability and Educational Technology
215-400-5137
School District of Philadelphia

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: "Pedro Ramos" [REDACTED]**To:** "Francesca Palladinetti" [REDACTED], "Michael Davis" [REDACTED], "Penny Nixon" [REDACTED]**Cc:** "Nicole Charles" [REDACTED], "Andrew Rachlin" [REDACTED]**Sent:** Thursday, March 15, 2012 10:41:33 PM**Subject:** Fwd: PSSA Testing

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: "Susan" [REDACTED]**To:** "Thomas Knudsen" [REDACTED], "Pedro Ramos" [REDACTED], "Penny Nixon" [REDACTED]**Sent:** Thursday, March 15, 2012 10:15:28 AM**Subject:** PSSA Testing

March 14, 2012

Mr. Knudsen, Mr. Ramos, Ms. Nixon,

As a teacher at Wagner Middle School, I am extremely concerned as to how our students are being treated during this critical time of PSSA testing. As teachers, we have worked diligently and hard all year to give our students the best education they deserve, preparing them with the skills, strategies, and necessary academics needed to be successful on the PSSA.

As you are aware, the week prior to the beginning of testing, we were informed that our students' teachers of record would not be permitted to test their own students. We then needed to pass this information on to our students, creating a sense of nervousness. Our students are smart and quite capable of making the grade on the test. The test is stressful to the students and this just added to their level of stress; someone they do not know being in the classroom with them did not create a sense of stability or comfort to them. As necessary, we encouraged them, telling them they are smart and can achieve success; they just need to have the same confidence in themselves that we have in them.

On Monday, [REDACTED], from the Office of Accountability, came to our school, and while our students were testing entered classrooms creating a great deal of angst as she stood directly in front of them, staring at what they were doing. The actions of [REDACTED] appeared to be done intentionally to intimidate our students. Intimidation creates fear, which in turn will impact anyone's confidence, particularly children. These children do not deserve to be treated in any manner that makes them uncomfortable.

On Wednesday, March 14, as a school, we were now given another directive, which stated, ALL artwork and motivational posters that were hanging in the classrooms all year long, needed to be removed. Interestingly enough, what is noted in the Directions Manual states, "Remove or cover all classroom instructional materials that may affect the validity of the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment. For example, posters about math rules or multiplication tables should be covered or removed..." (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2010, p. 5). The manual also states that scoring guidelines are permitted to be displayed since these items are made available to the students in their test and answer booklets. Motivational posters do not provide any instruction therefore they are not considered instructional material. It is interesting that according to the manual we are to actually walk around and encourage our students, so I do not grasp the concept of removing the posters. Additionally today, we were also informed that at the completion of the test, the students were not permitted to do puzzles, draw, or color. Again, this was contrary to the information given to us previously. Now we are informed they can put their heads down or read for pleasure. Quite honestly, I have never expected my students to put their head down in class; they need to be doing something constructive. Read

[REDACTED]

for pleasure after they have been testing for hours? I do not know of any adult that would find that appealing, let alone a child. Word searches and drawing, which is quite appealing to our students keeps them quiet, yet not sleeping. The changes thrust upon the staff and students today seem to be directed at our school only as when the District was contacted they knew of none of this. Additionally, when speaking to teachers of other schools these directives were not passed on to them.

Overall, our students in the School District of Philadelphia are being treated unfairly and not equal with all other districts in the state. This test is considered standardized and everyone is to be tested under the same conditions. While our students are not being treated equally, they have definitely been placed in an uncomfortable and stressful situation, which absolutely will have an impact on their results. Being a standardized test allows for data to be evaluated across the board, this is not the case with our students, therefore, making these results skewed.

The State of Pennsylvania has deemed it necessary to segregate the School District of Philadelphia, which is outrageous. However, the School District of Philadelphia is allowing this to happen without taking a stance for the children or teachers of the district. Yet it is also the district that is not treating the students of Wagner Middle School equally and fairly, as they are not being tested under the same conditions as the other schools in the district. It seems as if the media's portrayal of teachers and administrators improprieties is controlling the districts' monitoring system.

Again, our students are intelligent and quite capable of scoring proficient and advanced on the PSSA if they were on an equal playing field and not being set-up for failure.

I would hope that these issues and concerns are taken seriously and looked into by those who have the power to do right by our students. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
Teacher
Wagner Middle School

[REDACTED]

Deputy Chief of Staff
Office of the School Reform Commission
The School District of Philadelphia
440 North Broad Street, Suite 101
Philadelphia, PA 19130
215.400.6214 (office)
215.400.4011 (fax)

From: "Joe Dworetzky" [REDACTED]
To: "Nicky Charies" [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 15, 2012 10:01:30 PM
Subject: Fwd: Unfair testing environment at Wagner

What on earth?

Begin forwarded message:

From: [REDACTED], Melody" [REDACTED]
Date: March 15, 2012 9:31:55 PM EDT
To: Joseph Dworetzky [REDACTED] Wendell Pritchett [REDACTED]
Subject: Fwd: Unfair testing environment at Wagner

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: [REDACTED], Melody" [REDACTED]
Date: March 15, 2012 9:39:08 AM EDT
To: "Knudsen, Thomas" [REDACTED]
Subject: Unfair testing environment at Wagner

Hello,

My name is Melody [REDACTED] and I would like to inform you of the unfair testing practices here at Wagner Middle School.

Since the testing boxes containing the PSSA arrived, my school has been under scrutiny. Once the boxes arrived, [REDACTED] was sent from Office of Accountability to retape the boxes using security tape. After that, two days later she came back to "count" the boxes.

As the testing coordinator, I have been succumbed to numerous complaints from both [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] (another testing monitor) regarding our testing environment. They sent me an email saying out students could not draw, write, color, or complete word searches after completing the tests, and in addition, could not have any motivational posters, quotes, or sayings in the room.

This however, is not the same treatment at other school district schools and I think the district needs to step in and put a stop to this harassment. Myself and my colleagues are all prepared to fight this with legal action if the school district of Philadelphia does not put a stop to this.

In addition to this already stressful and tense work environment, myself and my colleagues have also been subjected to Dan creeping behind our closed doors during testing time. Students were also called out of the classrooms during testing and interviewed regarding past testing practices! As you can imagine, this has caused major disruptions and problems with our students seeing strangers creeping and peering at them during testing.

[REDACTED]

This jail cell type environment is clearly a recipe for failure. I am asking that someone immediately put an end to these unfair practices.

Thank you,

Melody [REDACTED]

Sent from my iPhone

Zimbra

Re: Notes from Wagner Monitoring

From : Francesca Palladinetti [REDACTED]
Subject : Re: Notes from Wagner Monitoring
To : Jeffrey Robinson [REDACTED]
Reply To : Fran Newberg [REDACTED]

Fri, Mar 16, 2012 01:45 AM

Jeff, I agree and I appreciate your professional judgement on this. Seems as though this was a organized testing environment with some minor procedural issues.

The team is very tense and I hope I can reassure them that we all have the same goals in mind. Fran

Fran Newberg, Ed.D.
Deputy Chief
Accountability and Educational Technology
215-400-5137
School District of Philadelphia

From: "Jeffrey Robinson" [REDACTED]
To: "Fran Newberg" [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 15, 2012 10:37:13 PM
Subject: Notes from Wagner Monitoring

Hi Fran,

I've attached my monitoring notes from today at Wagner as well as the testing schedule. Please let me know if you have any questions.

I'm hoping you are able to diffuse the situation tomorrow, and I think reporting the tape recording incident will only escalate tensions, so I'm going to hold off reporting that to the police in the hopes that everything can be resolved professionally.

Thanks, Fran.

Jeff

Assessment Development Coordinator
Office of Accountability and Assessment
School District of Philadelphia
Education Center
440 North Broad Street, Room 2134.33
Philadelphia, PA 19130
215-400-5365; [REDACTED]

Zimbra

Re: Unfair testing environment at Wagner

From : Penny Nixon [REDACTED]
Subject : Re: Unfair testing environment at Wagner
To : Fran Newberg [REDACTED]
Cc : Nicole Charles [REDACTED], Michael Davis [REDACTED], Karren Dunkley [REDACTED]

Fri, Mar 16, 2012 06:17 AM

Fran,

What time are you visiting the school? I would like to send a neutral party outside of the Office of Accountability to accompany you on the visit.

Penny

Sent from my iPhone

On Mar 16, 2012, at 2:06 AM, "Palladinetti, Francesca" [REDACTED] wrote:

Nicky,

I am going to Wagner to tomorrow. I spoke to the principal earlier today and reassured her that we want to support and not disrupt. I will follow up with you when I return.

They are a Tier 3 school. Their materials are quarantined.

Tensions are very high all around. I hope to calm them and reassure them that we are here to support to them.

Fran

Fran Newberg, Ed.D.
Deputy Chief
Accountability and Educational Technology
215-400-5137
School District of Philadelphia

From: "Nicole Charles" [REDACTED]
To: "Francesca Palladinetti" [REDACTED]
Cc: "Penny Nixon" [REDACTED], "Michael Davis" [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 15, 2012 10:27:31 PM
Subject: Fwd: Unfair testing environment at Wagner

Hi Fran,
Could you look at what happened here please? I'd like to respond to Joe as soon as possible. Thanks so much!

Nicky A Charles
Deputy Chief of Staff
Office of the School Reform Commission
The School District of Philadelphia
440 North Broad Street, Suite 101
Philadelphia, PA 19130
215.400.6214 (office)
215.400.4011 (fax)

From: "Joe Dworetzky" [REDACTED]
To: "Nicky Charles" [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 15, 2012 10:01:30 PM

Zimbra

Re: Unfair testing environment at Wagner

From : Francesca Palladinetti [REDACTED]
Subject : Re: Unfair testing environment at Wagner

Fri, Mar 16, 2012 07:36 AM

To : Penny Nixon [REDACTED]
Cc : Nicole Charles [REDACTED], Michael Davis [REDACTED], Karren Dunkley [REDACTED]

I am going at 12. I spoke to Maya and indicated I would follow up and get a statement from the teacher who filed a complaint about Uma.
I spoke to Andy and he recommended an investigatory conference to gather information re Uma 's actions.
Thank you, Fran

Sent from my iPhone

On Mar 16, 2012, at 6:17 AM, "Nixon, Penny" [REDACTED] wrote:

Fran,

What time are you visiting the school? I would like to send a neutral party outside of the Office of Accountability to accompany you on the visit.

Penny

Sent from my iPhone

On Mar 16, 2012, at 2:06 AM, "Palladinetti, Francesca" [REDACTED] wrote:

Nicky,

I am going to Wagner to tomorrow. I spoke to the principal earlier today and reassured her that we want to support and not disrupt. I will follow up with you when I return.

They are a Tier 3 school. Their materials are quarantined.

Tensions are very high all around. I hope to calm them and reassure them that we are here to support to them.

Fran

Fran Newberg, Ed.D.
Deputy Chief
Accountability and Educational Technology
215-400-5137
School District of Philadelphia

From: "Nicole Charles" [REDACTED]
To: "Francesca Palladinetti" [REDACTED]
Cc: "Penny Nixon" [REDACTED], "Michael Davis" [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 15, 2012 10:27:31 PM
Subject: Fwd: Unfair testing environment at Wagner

Hi Fran,
Could you look at what happened here please? I'd like to respond to Joe as soon as possible. Thanks so much!

Nicky A Charles

SUBJECT: Extract of Summary of Alleged PSSA Testing Violations 2012: PSSA Reading, Math, Writing, and Science

The following memo contains summaries of incidents documented throughout the 2012 PSSA administration period and the subsequent actions taken by The School District of Philadelphia Office of Accountability.

[REDACTED] Middle School (grades 6-8)

Incident #1:

On 3/13/12, a central office staff monitored the administration of the PSSA math test at your school. The following procedural infractions were observed:

- Testing coordinator giving out extra test books as "demonstration" material
- Teachers swapping testing material without the testing coordinator's knowledge
- Test coordinator leaving secure materials in main office
- Teacher leaving secure materials unattended in classrooms
- Teachers distributing calculators before the appropriate time -- when first section is sealed
- Teacher not reading the complete directions before starting a section
- Teacher not having the directions in possession before distributing secure materials to students
- Multiple students leaving a test session for a bathroom break before the testing was complete
- Students talking during the assessment
- Teachers returning materials up to 90 minutes after the class concludes
- Teachers reviewing test booklets after submitted by students

Action Taken:

After the observation, the monitor communicated the observed infractions in an email addressed to the principal. For the remainder of the test window, a monitor from central office visited the school to assist in securing all test materials before, during and after the scheduled administration window for each day. Additionally, these monitors circulated throughout the school observing test administration procedures. No further infractions were observed. A subsequent site visit and debrief with principal and staff was conducted by the Deputy Chief of Accountability and Educational Technology as per the request of the principal. These conversations and site visits further confirmed that all originally observed infractions had been addressed immediately by the principal and staff.

An e-mail was sent to the principal of the school from the Deputy of the Office of Accountability describing the above and requiring that the school do the following next year.

- 1) Explicitly state in your assessment plan that all the Do's and Don'ts of PSSA administration will be covered during staff training and adhered to, including (a) the processes the school will implement to ensure security of all test materials at all times, (b) the training that staff will receive related to test security and administration, (c) policies that will be implemented regarding student use of restrooms during testing, and (d) no communication will be allowed between students until all students in the room have completed and submitted their test booklets.

- 2) Cover ALL the Do's and Don'ts in the staff training/s in sufficient detail (with emphasis on that stated above), have discussion around this and other rules, solicit questions, and answer questions raised by the staff to provide clarity around issues of what is allowed and what is not.

The principal agreed to comply with all of the above requirements. Also, the principal was informed that next year the school may receive enhanced monitoring by the central office staff.

Incident #2:

On 3/13/12, a central office staff monitored the administration of the PSSA math test at your school. The monitor reported that a teacher was coaching students on responses.

Action Taken:

After the observation, the monitor communicated the observed infractions in an email addressed to the principal, as well as a recommendation that this teacher not be allowed to proctor further PSSA testing sessions. A subsequent site visit and debrief with the principal and staff, as well as a follow up interview of the monitor, was conducted by the Deputy Chief of Accountability and Educational Technology as per the request of the principal. These conversations and site visits further confirmed that the monitor was standing outside of the room with the door closed and was not in a position to hear the exact content of the teacher's conversations with students.

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA

Office of Accountability

440 NORTH BROAD STREET, SUITE 211
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19130-4015

TO: [REDACTED], Principal
FROM: Rosemary Hughes, Deputy, Accountability
DATE: October 3, 2012

SUBJECT: [REDACTED] Middle School 2012 PSSA Test Monitoring Follow-Up

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) Division of Assessment requires the school district to report any observed procedural infractions in test administration. The report must include the details of investigation, if any, and the actions taken by the school district. *Please note that this is a report that the Office of Accountability is required to submit to PDE each year.*

On 3/13/12, a central office staff monitored the administration of the PSSA math test at your school. The following procedural infractions were observed:

- Testing coordinator giving out extra test books as "demonstration" material
- Teachers swapping testing material without the testing coordinator's knowledge
- Test coordinator leaving secure materials in main office
- Teacher leaving secure materials unattended in classrooms
- Teachers distributing calculators before the appropriate time -- when first section is sealed
- Teacher not reading the complete directions before starting a section
- Teacher not having the directions in possession before distributing secure materials to students
- Multiple students leaving a test session for a bathroom break before the testing was complete
- Students talking during the assessment
- Teachers returning materials up to 90 minutes after the class concludes
- Teachers reviewing test booklets after submitted by students

After the observation, the monitor communicated the observed infractions in an email addressed to the principal. For the remainder of the test window, a monitor from central office visited your school to assist in securing all test materials before, during and after the scheduled administration window for each day. Additionally, these monitors circulated throughout your school observing test administration procedures. No further infractions were observed. A subsequent site visit and debrief with principal and staff was conducted by the Deputy Chief of Accountability and Educational Technology as per the request of the principal. These conversations and site visits further confirmed that all originally observed infractions had been addressed immediately by the principal and staff.

In preparation of the 2013 PSSA administration period, it is required that you and your test coordinator take these actions in the 2012-2013 academic year:

- 1) **Explicitly state** in your assessment plan that all the Do's and Don'ts of PSSA administration will be covered during staff training and adhered to, including (a) the processes the school will implement to ensure security of all test materials at all times, (b) the training that staff will receive related to test security and administration, (c) policies that will be implemented regarding student use of

restrooms during testing, and (d) no communication will be allowed between students until all students in the room have completed and submitted their test booklets.

- 2) **Cover ALL the Do's and Don'ts in the staff training/s** in sufficient detail (with emphasis on that stated above), have discussion around this and other rules, solicit questions, and answer questions raised by the staff to provide clarity around issues of what is allowed and what is not.

All of the above points must be covered in the school's assessment plan next year and thoroughly addressed during the staff training with discussion, soliciting questions around these and other issues, and providing answers to gain clarity on proper PSSA administration procedures and security.